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ONYX INFORMER

**JUNE
2003**

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA SINCE 1972



Reflection Eternal

One Mic

'03 Memories

Senior Testaments

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Conversation Piece : Letter from the Editor plus him

She finally gives in and lets him live

Ibiere: Yo!! Can you believe it, Day? We're finally finished! We're college graduates!!

Daitwan: You see. That's that nonsense in your life, because you know damn well I got time left on my bid.

Ibi: Oh, my bad. I know that's a sensitive topic for you. But you know what I'm saying. NU 03 is officially out! No more Bursar Blocks; no more swiping/signing in with CR. I mean, it's through. It's the end of the road.

Day: Listen here. I never liked that song and I'm not really liking YOU right now. I wanna tell you why I'm mad, though.

Ibi: But you're always mad...Whatever, Daitwan...Do your thing.

Day: I'm mad that it took this final edition, \$50 and a home cooked meal to get me on the "Big Dog's" page. You've been frontin' on letting me do an editorial for a minute. Can a brotha' breathe a little?

Ibi: What are you talking about?

Day: Aight, I wanna do it how they do it in all the renowned magazines.

Ibi: How's that?

Day: Talk trash about other people, big myself up, send shout outs to people who don't exist....

Ibi: You know I can't let you do that. *The Onyx* isn't that type of publication. But I'll let you take this opportunity to shine. Use it wisely because it's not likely to happen again.

Day: Come on. Baby steps...baby steps.

Ibi: Aight. Here's the format. We've got a blank page, but plenty of memories. Let's just use this time to look back, since that's what this month's issue is about. You know, our own reflections. Like when we first got here. Yo! Do you remember the first black person you saw?

Day: Yeeeeaaaah, and she was wearing black jeans. What about you?

Ibi: Ave was the first black person I met. It was move-in day. She and her pops were fussing some cat out in patois on the Fenway

in front of Kerr Hall. Now, that was funny!

Day: Lemme find out they had to check someone on the first day. There were a lot of antics/gates like that throughout the years. Like, cars breaking down in the middle of nowhere, dudes fightin' over girls, girls fightin' over dudes, people getting blown up in the proctor log, heated battles over James Bond, Tekkan 3, spades and ball, racing back to the dorms after eatin' in the Caf, missing morning classes because you were up all night working a D-shift...

Ibi: ..the trips to Six Flags, Montreal, Orlando, Miami, Jamaica, NY to crash birthday parties in Brooklyn or wind on the Parkway; playing paint ball, responding to mass emails over intersessions, debating the origin of the "NU 03" call, when everyone knows it started on the third and fifth floors of Kerr Hall, politickin' in the "Tute" and being told we had to leave because we were too loud, going to "Greek" parties and strollin' like we were the ones who had thrown it ... Yeah, we definitely had fun. Do you remember when we all had that party in West Village for Jeff's birthday and the RA and NUPD rammed the door in?

Day: Yo, that's real!

Ibi: Cat's got real belligerent that night. I can't lie, though. I was shook!

Day: Yeah, so shook that you hid in closet while everyone else got written up.

Ibi: Hey, I had a reputation to maintain and a job I to keep. I couldn't afford having my name on blast in the NU News Crime Log.

Day: That's exactly why we had all the other "jump offs" in Mission Hill. Like Ellis' party sophomore year. Somebody left the ill butt stains on my walls.

Ibi: Stay focused, Day. We did have a lot of fun together, though. But we also went through a lot of madness, too. Having to fight to keep the Institute, occupying the building for 40 days and 40 nights, seeing everyone chase Freeland across Centennial Commons, taking over Huntington and Mass. Ave for hours and then seeing it all on the front page of the *Boston Globe*...

Day: Going home for Co-op, not getting a job, finding a job, not being able to stay

because the job was susept, leaving the job, finding a new one at a temp agency, leaving after a week, beacuse the person who was on vacation comes back , working construction, getting paid off the hook, and then having to pay it all back to NU...

Ibi: ...returning from intersession freshman year and realizing that a lot of people had decided not come back, finding out you're blocked even though you're on full scholarship, getting picked for verification and the financial aid office telling you the selection was random when practically every Black student I knew had been selected "randomly". What's that all about?

Day: Ibi, that sounds kinda personal.

Ibi: And yours wasn't? I'm just saying - everyone had to deal with that.

Day: You're right. But I'm glad it's over...for you, at least.

Ibi: Yeah. You'll hold it down, though.

Day: In every aspect of the word. From school to work, from work to the *Onyx* - I'll be able to hold it down. We've got new blood coming aboard ready to pick up where you left off. Hopefully, getting us to where we need to be.

Ibi: And where's that?

Day: Publishing regularly.

Ibi: And updating the website, I hope. I'm playing. I have faith in you, Day.

Day: I shall try. But I'ma need a little vacation after putting all that work into this edition. Did you see how many times I was listed in the credits? I wore many hats.

Ibi: Didn't we both. But this issue had to be right. NU 03 deserved it. It'll be hard seeing everyone move forward on their paths

Day: That's why entitled this edition "Reflections Eternal." Now you can say the name "03". Any questions?

Ibi: This is dedicated to you all. Peace and many blessings.

Day: Uno



Angela Davis Speaks:

CONFRONTING RACIAL PROFILING

Political and Social Activist, Author and University of California Professor, Angela Davis addressed students, faculty and members of the community in a discussion on Racial Profiling.

Davis' speech, given at Northeastern University's Blackman Auditorium, was the highlight of a two-day conference which convened last March. The focus of the conference was to address racial profiling in the twenty first century.

"This conference provides an opportunity to bring together academics, researchers, police and community members to discuss analysis of racial profiling data and to discuss how to use the statistics collected to improve police-community relations," said Institute for Race and Justice Director Jack McDevitt, a sponsor of the event.

Angela Davis' writing focuses on race, women, class, and politics. She directs her activism towards exposing racism in the U.S. prison system, which she refers to as the "prison industrial complex".

"Race has always played a role in the presumption of criminality," said Davis during her keynote address in Blackman Auditorium. "Historians



racial profiling became the norm, with the focus being taken off of African Americans and Latinos, to Arabs and Muslims.

"We inhabit a society that has a thoroughly racist history," she said. "The question is, how are we going to begin to become aware of the extent to which we live out that history. We are that history. Our enemies reflect that history."

The Institute on Race and

studied abroad in Germany, Paris and the United States. By the year 1968, Angela had attended the University of Paris, Brandeis University, in Waltham, Massachusetts and the University of San Diego, thus obtaining Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts Degrees.

While teaching at the University of San Diego, Davis became more involved with the Communist party and became a member in 1968. She was also a member of the Black

"Race has always played a role in the presumption of criminality." - Angela Davis

assume black people engaged in crimes."

During her address, Davis said that it is more likely for people of color to be accused of a crime, due to the color of their skin. She added that the three-strike rule has been legitimized by the Supreme Court. The prisons system is a prime example of this. Statistics show that a disproportionate number of people of color live out their lives behind bars. African Americans represent the majority of those incarcerated.

"Racial profiling might be affirmative action reversed," said Davis. "The people who might have benefited from Racial Profiling are pushed into the hands of law enforcement."

After September eleventh,

Justice is located at 400 Churchill, at Northeastern University. The conference is designed to create awareness as well as to brainstorm and develop resources that members of the community can use to make changes in policy and advance the cause of social justice.

"We have to be opposed to racism, no matter who the target is."

Co-sponsors of the conference include The Police Executive Research Forum, The American Civil Liberties Union and The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives.

Angela Davis was born on January 26, 1944 in Birmingham, Alabama to B. Frank and Sally E. Davis. As a youth, Angela became apart of a communist youth group and

Panther Party. Her affiliations with such radical organizations brought about scrutiny from the United State Government and as a result, she was dismissed from her position as assistant professor of philosophy at the University of California at Los Angeles.

In 1970, Davis became the third woman in history to be wanted by the FBI. She spent two weeks evading law enforcement officers on conspiracy and gun charges, until her apprehension in a Greenwich Village hotel. After sixteen months of incarceration, Davis was acquitted on all charges, including murder and kidnapping.



Amiri Baraka Under Fire

A Speech Delivered By Andrea Grime

At the Annual Roland E. Latham Oratory Competition

cultivated throughout his life. In developing what author Werner Sollors calls a desire to rebel "against the separation of life and art", his poetry has become a weapon with which he fights the evils that bombard society. In "Somebody Blew Up America" his battle is against the many different faces of terror which he has seen manifested throughout history.

In his poem, he addresses slavery in the line "Who bought the slaves, who sold them?". He also brings up the Jewish Holocaust in the lines "Who put the Jews in the ovens, and who helped them do it?". While almost every line of the poem is a question, he provides virtually no answers. This is in sharp contrast to some of his older work, in which he demands specific action from his audience. For example, in his violent poem titled, "Black People!" he wrote, "We must make our own World, man, our own world, and we can not do this unless the white man is dead. Let's get together and kill him my man." Looking at this poem up against "Somebody Blew Up America", it's easy to see that, if anything, "Somebody Blew Up America" is relatively tame, for while its questions are asked in a leading fashion, they do not call for any specific and vicious action.

The most cited and controver-

sins of slander. However, in his defense, Baraka has stated that the controversial lines of his poem are simply alluding to the notion that Israel knew that the events of 9-11 were going to take place, not that they committed the crime. He cannot be chastised for exploring a political theory in the context of a poem.

New Jersey state officials, led by Gov. James McGreevy also see the necessity of Baraka's retreat and they cite the inappropriateness and insensitivity of the poem. A spokesperson for McGreevy told the Associated Press that Baraka should "apologize for any potential misinterpretation ... and resign." This call for resignation is without merit because it was known to the groups that elected Baraka to be poet laureate that he has always demonstrated his disgust with the establishment and with imperialism. This disgust is confirmed in his essay, "Social Change & Poetic Tradition" when he writes, "The...traditions that dominate US imperialist society are confirmed as evil by the lies and bloody violence necessary for their maintenance."

The ADL and New Jersey state officials are some of the many people clamoring for Baraka's resignation. Because of a few lines in his poem, "Somebody Blew Up America", they

"The Black Artist's role...is to aid in the destruction of America. The Black Artist must demonstrate sweet life, how it differs from the deathly grip of the White eyes. The Black Artist must teach the White Eyes their deaths, and teach the black man how to bring these deaths about. End quote. From the poem, 'Black Artist' "

Do the lines I've just quoted seem anti-American, racist, vile? They were once penned by Amiri Baraka, the poet laureate of New Jersey. Hard to imagine that a man capable of such callous writing would be appointed to this position. The incense does not stop there, however. Amiri Baraka recently presented his incendiary poem titled "Somebody Blew Up America," and it has ignited a storm of controver-

**"Who knew the World Trade Center was gonna get bombed
Who told 4000 Israeli workers at the Twin Towers
To stay home that day?" - Amiri Baraka**

sy. In this poem, Baraka reflects upon imperialism and acts of terror throughout history, particularly in context with the Sept. 11 tragedy. Because a few lines in his poem are seen as insensitive and inflammatory, Baraka has been accused of being anti-Semitic and an embarrassment to the state of New Jersey. Consequently, he is being asked to give up his position of poet laureate. However, the explanations for the current attacks on Amiri Baraka are not sufficient to necessitate his resignation. To explain why the attacks on Baraka are unfounded, I will show that the socio-political conscience of his poem is no different than most of his previous work.

The passion as a political activist that Baraka brings to his poem "Somebody Blew Up America" has been

sial lines in "Somebody Blew Up America" are

--Who knew the World Trade Center was gonna get bombed
--Who told 4000 Israeli workers at the Twin Towers To stay home that day

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has led the outcry against Baraka mainly because of these lines. The ADL sees them not as questioning thoughts, but as an indirect accusation that One, Israel knew and was responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Center. And two, that Israel warned Israeli nationals to stay away from these fated buildings. Even more so, the ADL sees these lines as an attack on Jews. Shai Goldstein, regional directory for the ADL, told reporters he wants Baraka to basically repent of his

have begun what Baraka calls "character assassination" oh him. They see his poetry as slanderous, anti-Semitic, and inappropriate for a poet laureate; all reasons which are unfounded because Baraka has always written such poetry. There are numerous articles and books that have been written over the years describing Baraka's political opinions and poetry including "Amiri Baraka: The Politics and Art of a Black Intellectual", just to name one. It is impossible that people who elected him poet laureate did not know about his past. This leads me to ask....Why? Why is a man being asked to step down as poet laureate for 3 out of 226 lines in a poem, when he has written thousands of controversial lines in his lifetime. So, just as Amiri Baraka, asks "Who?" in his poem, I leave you with my own question of "Why?"



N N N N N N U U U U '03 !!!

Bringing back sweet memories

like black is beautiful. names from the seventies
let me tap into your energy
fields of dreams become my property
When I reach my destiny like a prophecy
Especially when I 'm 'bringing back sweet memories'
I go deep into my mind. see I got a treasury
That float through my head like a sweet melody
What you telling me
Reflection is a collection of memories
Definitely this is how hiphop was meant to be
Eventually. I knew I'd run into Hi-Teknology
It was only a matter of time like centuries
Check the recipe or technique to how it sound so sweet
I freak with word power. my man speak with beats
If I could make it in New York. I figured anywhere I'd make it
Came to Cincinnati linked with Mood. and we did Sacred
Hi-Tek beats became my favorite
Hustle on the side was the cut
We started to put songs together like 'What!'
Travelled the world. came back to the crib
And hit the motherland
Yeah. this year we put in work and got some other plans
In fact. that's where I'll take the fam
when the Reflection joint is done
By the time you hear this. I'll be basking in African sun
like Wow!
We made it
We here

Artist: Talib Kweli and Hi-Tek (Reflection Eternal)

Album: Train of Thought

Song: Memories Live

Looking Back ...Moving Forward

Reflections By Ibiere Seck

It has been nearly five years since I arrived in Boston. I had just traveled some 3,000 miles from Seattle and I was nervous. Nervous, not because it was my first time away from home, but because I didn't know what the future would hold.

The first few months here were extremely difficult for me. Not only was the city cold, but so were the people (or so I thought). I'd make eye contact with people and no one smiled. I'd look lost and no one offered directions. I'd ask for the time and no one had a watch. Based on these (and a few other not so friendly interactions) I resolved that I had no place in Boston and that coming to Northeastern had been a mistake.

But ... I was stuck. So in order to make my transition easier, I increased the number of calls I made home. One day I was talking to my grandfather on the phone. He grew up in the south and is a World War II veteran so he was no stranger to barriers and knew how difficult it was adjusting to new places. A man of very few words, he said to me: "New England is a different kind of place, with a different kind of people. So just take care of yourself"

Take care of myself. I didn't know exactly what that meant (and I still don't), but I knew that in order to take care of myself, I would have to first find comfort in this new city and that seemed nearly impossible. But doesn't everything, at first?

When I sat down to place this reflection on paper, I thought about those first few days here. I also thought about my future, about the friends I had made over the years, about the falling outs with some of those same friends, and about the controversies in which I had involved myself. I thought about all the things that have happened during our time here - about how much the world has changed and how much it continues to change. Bust most of all I thought about how I was able to find comfort through it all.

Every where we look, there is conflict. The Palestinians and Israelis are fighting over land; and people are dying.

Violence, brought on by civil war, has escalated in the Congo, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire; and people are dying. In Northern Ireland the Catholics and Protestants are engaging in a battle that has become more political than it has religious; and people are dying. Iraqis are protesting our government's military presence in their country; and people are dying.

"Coming to Northeastern has had nothing to do with who I am. I would've been alright no matter what school I went to."

-Anonymous Student

Domestically, the economy is suffering. People are being laid off, affirmative action in higher education is at risk of eradicated, young people are gunning one another down and assaulting their parents ... parents are assaulting their children. And on top of all of this, we face the threat of yet another military conflict surrounding nuclear weapons in North Korea. You would think that with all of this going on around us, achieving that physical and emotional comfort, that many of us long for, would be nearly impossible. But that hasn't been the case. Because somehow, while students at Northeastern, we have succeeded in finding that comfort.

In the midst of all the violence, political unrest, and panic in the world ? through times of distress and uncertainty, this community, our Northeastern community, has fostered us. During our five years here we've experienced sit-ins and marches, debates and vigils. It has been our cultural, religious, political and educational center. We have all been comforted and we've all been nurtured. And although, for many of us, Boston is not "home", Northeastern University has become our home.

I told that to a friend of mine not too long ago and tried to express to her what all Northeastern had given us. She totally disagreed, saying, "coming to Northeastern has had nothing to do with who I am. I would've been alright no matter what school went to." She's probably right, but we should all acknowledge that we didn't go to just any university. We came here. And it

because of our experience here that we've developed into the people we are today. We have formed alliances, championed causes, fought social injustice, mastered the art of learning, experienced the corporate culture, exercised our talents and demonstrated professional promise. Now we are all well rounded individuals, ready to face the challenges of the real world. NU

had something to do with that.

So with that said, I would like to thank the university for creating the environment that forced us to struggle financially, wait patiently in long lines, involve ourselves in campus politics and much, much more. We are forever in debt to you ? LITERALLY.

Now I would like to personally thank the members of the class of 2003 for adding to my life... for crossing my path because, without many of you I would have surely given up that first year. For those of you I didn't have the pleasure of meeting ? thank you smiling when I passed, giving directions when I looked lost and giving of day. To the rest of you, I leave you with this: Never be dissuaded ? Never be discouraged. Because even when everything around seems like it's in complete chaos, you can find peace.

Good luck to you all. And congratulations.



Beyond These Walls

Reflections By Linda Highman

Congratulations! You have just completed your undergraduate degree. What an accomplishment. By now, you should know everything. Those once complicated and foreign terms such as 'E=MC2' and 'ANOVA' are now a part of your common language. You've read Socrates, analyzed and written your own business plan, dissected mammals of all shapes and sizes and learned how to design buildings. Now, five years, 176 credits and \$150,000 later, you are finally ready to embrace the world and all it has to offer because after all, you know everything right?

Truthfully, how many of us REALLY know what E=MC2 means? If presented with the same statistics problems that appeared on your winter quarter final Middler year, could you now solve it with ease? If asked to write that paper on Pre-emptive War purely from memory, could you? If you answered yes to any of these questions then give yourself a pat on the back. If you answered no then my question to you is what have you learned? What is it that you will take away from your

Now that we have made it we must not forget the journey that we took along the way.

experience here at Northeastern?

The aforementioned question was something that caused me to do some internal reflection as I approached my graduation date. To be completely honest, I still have no idea what E=MC2 means. And despite having taken Professor Nathanson's Philosophy of War and Peace class, I still cannot write a paper on Pre-emptive War purely from memory. Truthfully I have a confession to make. After all of my internal reflection, I came to the conclusion that I do not know everything. If you came to the same conclusion that I did, then you too might be asking yourself, what was it all for? What is it that I will take away from my experience at Northeastern?

I
n all I feel that I am leaving Northeastern wiser and more knowledgeable than when I came in.

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However, much of what I learned did not always occur in the classroom. It occurred during that summer I was an orientation leader, in the dorms, and in the variety of student organizations

College is a time for growth...not just intellectual growth, but also social and personal growth. These past five years have been spent learning not just about our majors, but about ourselves.

and activities I took part in. My learning took place at the sites where I volunteered, the internship I did and during my co-op's. After all my internal reflection I have come to realize that learning is constant. It occurs everyday, everywhere and often in the least likely places.

During the past five years some of my most valuable lessons were learned outside of the classroom. These lessons did not always take the form of theoretical knowledge rather they were lessons that taught me about survival and life. Lessons that taught me the power of persuasion, how to live off \$10 for the week, and what a true friend really is. These were lessons learned during my numerous rides on the T, those many nights out on the

town and during those situations where only my true friends were left standing by my side.

College is a time for growth...not just intellectual growth, but also social and personal growth. These past five years have been spent learning not just about our majors, but about ourselves. Yes we have gained a lot of knowledge from our classroom experiences... engineers now know what E=MC2 means and those who took statistics know when ANOVA is applicable. However, we must not forget the practical knowledge that we have gained from all our other experiences.

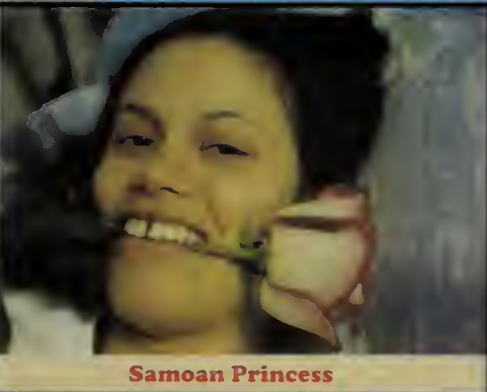
When we came to college, most of us probably had no idea of what lay ahead of us, experiences we would have, the things we would do or the friends we would make along the way. However we all knew that this road would end with us receiving our degree. Ursula

K. LeGuin wrote that "it is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end." While our roads may have been different, longer or shorter and/ or paved

with a few more obstacles, each of us has traveled a road that has led us to this common destination today. It does not matter how we got here rather, that we made it.

Now that we have made it we must not forget the journey that we took along the way. Those experiences, both good and bad, have all been lessons that have shaped us into the people we are today. We must not also forget the people that have helped us out along the way. From that professor who gave us that extra day to turn in a paper to those family members who have been a source of financial and emotional support. We leave Northeastern wiser, more knowledgeable and more determined than when we came in. We have spent the past five years thinking about and preparing for this day and now that it is here many of us may have asked ourselves, what next?

Today we embark upon a new journey. Our paths will now break into separate directions as we go off to become CEO's, lawyers, doctors, nurses, architects and engineers. We may not know everything, but we have learned and experienced a lot. We leave knowing that learning is constant and it is a process that will continue everyday for the rest of our lives. We leave Northeastern with extensive resumes that detail not only our work experience, but our life experience. We know that the best is yet to come and that we can accomplish anything we put our minds to. As it was when we entered Northeastern five years ago, today we leave not knowing what lies ahead but stand ready, prepared and eager to embrace whatever road we may encounter.



Samoan Princess



H A I T I A N

S W E E T N E S S



Skip hmmmms Bugs

NNNNNNN UUUU '03 !!!

NNNNNNN UUUU '03 !!!



NNNNNN UUUU '03 !!! NNNNNN UUUU '03 !!!







Magical Moments...Magnificent Movements

Reflections: Dana Benton

To the Class of 2003,

Today, in the midst of an intricate path we find ourselves, watching, wondering, remembering, breathing and just being. Inhaling the fantasies of the future and exhaling the memories of the past. We sit here, today, together, experienced and educated, and equipped with the tools to swim incessantly and successfully in the seas of reality.

We are a proud people, for we have been graced with the gift of priceless potential. We are filled to the brim with the anticipation of conquering our amazing aspirations. Today, I see Northeastern University's class of 2003, a true reflection of America's diversity.

The faces of Blacks and Whites and all that lie between, sit patiently representing a vast array of ethnicity's and countries, spirituality's and sexuality's.

- *I see collegiate politicians, activist, and musicians.*
- *I see, RA's, OL's, and OHA's.*
- *I see, Teachers, Engineers and Counselors, Businessmen & Women, Physicians, Clinicians, Historians, Mathematicians, Psychologists, Scientist and of coarse Sociologist.*
- *I see, athletes and those involved in sororities & fraternities.*

Waiting for the exact magical moment, when their hands grasp that delicate document that will provide them with a plethora of possibilities.

- *The magical moment when your bank account, your parents and the bursar cease their partnerships.*
- *The moment when BHOP, Chicken Lou's and the cafeteria are no longer considered fine dining.*
- *The moment when you realize that you never have to add, drop, or withdraw again.*
- *The moment, when you view Middler year, the paper, as a monumental accomplishment.*
- *The moment when going to a nightclub and then staying up all night to study still seems logical.*
- *The moment when you realize the people seated next to you, behind you, and in front of you have greatly impacted your life.*
- *That moment when you will be forced to pack your bags with your memories, your regrets, your tears, your joys and your pain of the past and continue on the intricate path called life.*

And when you realize the existence of this magical moment that I speak of, I ask that you stop for another moment, and remember this statement, once made by Ralph Emerson "do not go where the path may lead, but go instead where there is no path and leave a trail..."

Today, I challenge you to take that magical moment and create a magnificent movement. Dare to dream and agree to believe in your ability to bless the masses with your individuality and make change in this world a reality

- * *For it has been within the walls of this university that your patience, thoughts, decisions and actions have been challenged.*
- * *It is from this experience that you have developed the knowledge and practice to master your desired field of study.*
- * *Perhaps, most importantly this day validates your ability to commit, transcend barriers, embrace obstacles, confront challenges and excel educationally.*

So, on this day June 14, 2003, I commend our class, for you all have truly achieved excellence. It is within the thread that is woven between your goals, determination, dreams and destiny that you will:

- *Find hope and happiness*
- *Find the spirit to seek and succeed*
- *Find the courage to create charismatic change!*

Written By: Dana L. Benton, Ujima Scholar, Class of 2003

Recipient of: B.S. in the area of Sociology/ concentration in Elementary Education

Future plans: Attending Harvard Graduate School of Education in the Fall of 2003

"Tute Celebrates 35 Years of Excellence

Words By Adrienne Thomas

"If you're not here to serve the students, you're in the wrong place," is a forceful assertion offered by former Northeastern University Vice President, John D. O'Bryant. And serve the students is what he did best. The John D. O'Bryant African American Institute (AAI) celebrated thirty-five years of its service to students of African origins the weekend of May 2-4, 2003.

The 'Tute,' as it is affectionately called by students who frequent its walls, was named, in 1993, in honor of the first African American to be appointed vice president at Northeastern University.

A Boston native and educated by Boston public schools, John D. O'Bryant received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Boston University. As founder of many local and statewide education advocacy groups, he was described by his long time staff as "a compassionate man who loved people,...always optimistic and reminding others to keep things in perspective."

The 35th anniversary celebration of the Institute was the finale to Unity Week, a week described by AAI Associate Dean and Director Lula Petty-Edwards to "bring people of African origin together, to reminisce, to celebrate the diversity of our cultural heritage, and to unify around future goals and visions."

"Unity week literally means coming together in a positive way," she adds. Unity week began on Sunday, April 27th with the Unity Brunch held in the library on the third floor of the AAI.

"Social and economic mobility for Black people is inextricably intertwined with educational opportunity, especially higher education,"

- Dean Petty-Edwards

Another event that took place during the week was a discussion on affirmative action, held in the Cabral Center and sponsored by the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute Unity Gospel Ensemble.

On Friday afternoon, the softball game generated fierce competition between students, faculty and alumni at Carter Park on Columbus Avenue. Later Friday evening, the Unity Ensemble held its Spring Concert in the Curry Student Center Ballroom. Afterwards, students and alumni had a chance to relax as they mingled dur-



Dean Lula Petty-Edwards and Dana Benton at the Unity Awards Banquet

ing a Game Night at the AAI. Northeastern University Music Professor Leonard Brown and his Jazz Combo gave a lively performance that had the audience swaying to their cool beat. To top off the night, alumni and students partied at AfterHours.

The much anticipated Greek

Step Show took place Saturday in Mathews Arena. Nicole Williams, a graduate of the Northeastern University's Business School, Class of '98 said she was, "really pleased to see Sigma and Iota [stepping]."

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Beta Alpha Chapter and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Lambda Upsilon Chapter won first place, while Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and Delta Sigma Theta came in second.

Later that evening, the AAI held a semi-formal in the Ballroom, which then carried over to AfterHours.

"The music was really good,"

said Angela Motley, wife of Dr. Keith Motley, dean of student services. "It was interesting to mingle with the younger students. It was a lot of fun. It was good getting to see old friends."

Darren Lynch, Class of '88 and graduate of the Business School, commented on coming back, saying "It's good to come back, to carry on traditions."

In efforts to support the AAI and its programs, long time supporter of the AAI and graduate of Northeastern University, Larry Dean, proposed to raise \$2 million to support the Institute and student retention.

"They [alumni] expressed a firm commitment to supporting Larry," said Dean Petty-Edwards. "I appreciate the level of commitment expressed by the alumni. What we have to do now is aggressively implement Mr. Dean's plans and work with him and the development office to reach this fundraising goal."

The following Sunday, the Unity and Awards Banquet was held on the ground floor of the Curry Student Center. The Institute acknowledged the dedication of more than 25 students. In addition, a number of outstanding students, campus organizations and community activists were recognized. Award Recipients included Dana Benton (Senior Academic Award), Liane Dixon (Reggie Lewis Athletic Award) and Northeastern University Cultural Dance Organization (Fine Arts).

Many students as well as staff helped to pull off the week's events and made Unity Week and the 35th anniversary a success.

"I'm glad the weekend happened," said Dean Petty-Edwards. "I was pleased to see the amount of student participation in planning the events."

The Institute after 35 years is still going strong and continues to move forward with its programs, services, and continuing support of students.

"Social and economic mobility for Black people is inextricably intertwined with educational opportunity, especially higher education," said Dean Petty-Edwards. "Young people today should be enrolled in college, should have adequate financial support through graduation, and should make contributions crucial to improving the plight of people of African origin, specifically, and society generally."



ONE MIC + ONE OPP. = REMEDY 4... SILENCED WORDS

Artists of all sorts waltzed into the dimly lit room to share their talents creating a smooth and cool ambiance. Their souls debated through loud stares while screaming through silent comments, yet they were not heard. Intimidation grasped their emotions. However, they attempted to contain the adrenaline rush through trembling knees. There were masses listening and masters commanding at the front of the room calling out A.KA's and B.K.A's cause here no body goes by their government. However, they all yearned to be heard and known by all and that day some spoke with song and rhyme while others spoke with silence. Not by choice!

Frustration created thoughts; ideas, which evolved into actions, hence came the birth of a new age radio show, Silenced Words. Beginning in September of 2002, every Wednesday 3-5 pm, R&B, Hip-Hop and Reggae played sporadically on the radios of music's hungry listeners. Music Lovers, who turned on their dial to 104.9 fm expecting to hear music, had no idea they would be drawn into a zone way beyond hearing, a place of listening.

Every week for six months high school students from Cathedral, City on the Hill, John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics & Science, and Latin Academy just to name a few, piled into a small studio enthusiastic about their opportunity to take over the air waves with their opinions and their talents. During any given session up to twenty-five students showed up ready to rhyme, sing, kick a beat or some knowledge. From heated debates and forums surrounding issues such as gun violence, teen pregnancy, the MCAS neighborhood and school conditions, came strong leaders with proactive ideas.

In that small studio I found hope, joy, power and understanding. Deep inside the hearts and souls of these students I found a voice that had been silenced by critical parents, teachers, media and the alike. In these young people of color I found magical and innovative ideas, hidden aspirations, and secret goals. Perhaps the most fascinating discovery came when their silenced words found an abode to be heard within." - Dana Benton "Intuition"



Sex & Relationships

"I want somebody that's gonna be my best friend and my boyfriend. Support me in anything and everything I do. If not than you need not be a part of my life."

"I think wisely about what I do before I do it."

"It's not all about giving it up. You want somebody to be with you for who you are & not what your giving them."

"It's not about the profits & the benefits."

"I'm not giving up what your not giving up."

"There are so many young moms, because they never took the time to sit down & know their partners...in order to decide together what you want for each other."

-"While 56% of California adults surveyed feel that teenage pregnancy is a serious problem, 80% of Latino adults and 77% of African American adults view teenage pregnancy as a serious problem." www.letsgetreal.com



OUR THOUGHTS...OUR VOICES...OUR DREAMS...OUR REALITIES...

Growing up in the Hood...What's difficult about it?

"I'm surrounded by nothing but two sets of projects and a bunch of drug dealers. Dealers that are out there getting money..." - 17 year old mission hill resident

"Who you hang out with & what comes with hanging with a certain crew." --16 year old male

*"Making friends, don't want to get close to people, because you don't know if they'll be there tomorrow." --Scuba Jordan**

"The physical toll of gun violence on America's children and youth is substantial, with thousands killed or injured each year... All youth are at risk for gun violence, but certain groups, especially African American adolescent males, are at particularly high risk."

www.futureofchildren.org





Our Plans for the Future

Once we had a discussion on the importance of establishing a Plan A and a Plan B. These are some of the results of that conversation.

<u>Names</u>	<u>Plan A:</u>	<u>Plan B</u>
Knowledge*	"A singer"	"An accountant"
The Philosopher*	"Basketball"	[" Computer soft ware designer"]
Anonymous	"Baseball player"	"Mathematician"
Jaden*	"To be a rapper"	"Work in the music industry"
Aa...*	"I want to count & spend money." (A future investor!J)	

*street alias'/ nicknames

"Some people don't understand. They think that their the best...there's somebody always better!" -- 15 year old male

"To be a rapper is my Plan A and to be a Lawyer is my plan B, I can lie good!"--10th grade male

I want ...

"I want a family a crib(house), a whip(car), and a good job"

"To finish High School and go to law school"

"To retire at 50 and make lots of money"



OUR THOUGHTS...OUR VOICES...OUR DREAMS...OUR REALITIES...

In Our Schools...We see

"In our school we see marijuana, ecstasy and mushrooms"- 17 year old female

There's always security at our school, but they don't do anything. They make a big deal about passes...but not drugs & guns." - 16 year old male

We Need Teachers that are "REAL"...

"Class is more interesting when a teacher relates to me." -- 15 year old Latina

"I need someone who is down to earth & want to be here with." -- 17 year old Haitian female

"Some teachers you feel like they don't know what I'm going through & have never been through it."
-Female senior attending an Exam school

"Since 1980, the number of minority students enrolled in public education has been rising while the number of minority teachers has been falling. Minority students now make up nearly 30% of the elementary and secondary school-age population, while the number of minority teachers has fallen from 11.7% to 10.3% during the past fifteen years." - www.sedl.org



Affirmative Action: Is Race Still An Issue

Words By Ibiere Seck



In 1619, the first shipment of Africans was brought in chains to the British colony of Jamestown, in what is known as Virginia. This massive abduction set the precedent for what would be 246 years of enslavement, 380 years of lynchings, 384 years mental and physical bondage, and hundreds of years of oppression, suppression, repression, subjugation and discrimination of African peoples - all of which was founded in the belief that Black people were less than human and was facilitated by something as insignificant as the pigment in ones skin. In America - race always has and continues to be an issue.

In less than two weeks the

means of diversifying their student bodies. Before moving forward with the discussion of this heatedly debated case and the ramifications of its outcome, it is first necessary to inform you of the events that led up to this legal confrontation.

In 1997, Barbara Grutter, a University of Michigan Law School applicant, filed suit against the University claiming that she, a middle-class white woman, had been discriminated against. She argued that a less qualified black student was given preference because of his race and admitted while she was rejected.

This evening we will briefly discuss the past attacks on Affirmative Action, the impacts on Black-student enrollment and the likely impact of a loss in the Michigan case. Through an

Let us begin by looking back at the single most influential case of this decade concerning affirmative action by schools: Regents of the University of California v. Bakke.

In 1978, a young white woman in California argued that she had been passed up for admission at the University of California by black students with lower grades. The court was divided but ruled that social discrimination was no justification to discriminate against whites, but that race could be taken into account if it was one of several factors in the admissions process. Former President Lyndon Johnson clearly agreed.

In June 1965 during his speech at Howard University President Johnson justified a move toward what is now known as affirmative action stating that an affirmative effort needed to be made to provide opportunities for Blacks.

The Bakke case dealt the first major blow to Affirmative action. As a result, other challenges followed and affirmative action gains showed a steady decline.

If one examines the current state of Black students in higher education, one will find that the Affirmative Action losses in states like California and Texas have led to dramatic decreases in the enrollment of Black students in those states. For example, Proposition 209 in California caused the Black enrollment at state colleges to plummet from nearly 10 percent to less than 3 per-

It is clear. The future of Affirmative Action in institutions of higher learning is bleak. And given the past attacks against race-based admissions, one has much to fear.

Supreme Court will hear a case that will decide the future of Affirmative Action in higher education. Nine individuals will decide the whether state universities, colleges and other post-secondary institutions may consider race in their admissions process as a

analysis of Affirmative Action's rough beginnings, present state and grim future, I will show that not only are race-based admission policies essential to educational advancement of Black people but necessary to our social mobility.

cent, according to Robin Lenhardt, faculty fellow at Georgetown Law Center. "The stakes are high," she said. "If the courts rule that race is not a valid factor in admissions decisions, it could wreak havoc on admission programs and change the face of higher education."



In other words - students of color would be unable to meet the criteria set by the University admissions boards and the face of higher education would be completely white. It is clear. The future of Affirmative Action in institutions of higher learning

With this, the social mobility of Black people would be seriously suppressed and without social mobility our people would be destined to rely on the charity of others.

The late Justice Harry Blakmun, in his decision surrounding the Bakke case, he not only justified the practice of race-based admissions but cautioned that there would be huge ramifications if they were eradicated. He wrote: "In order to get beyond racism,

we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally we must treat them differently. We cannot - we dare not - let the Equal Protection clause perpetuate racial supremacy." With the end of race-based admission

not an issue. But race is an issue.

And until a department store clerk chooses not to consider my race when deciding whether to track my every move--RACE WILL REMAIN AN ISSUE.

Until a police officer chooses not to consider my brother's race when deciding whether to pull him over while driving-- RACE WILL REMAIN AN ISSUE.

Until a bank officer chooses not to consider my mother's race when deciding whether or not to approve her loan -- RACE WILL REMAIN AN ISSUE.

And until a judge or jury chooses not to consider the race of my cousins, uncles and friends when deciding whether to sentence them to 12 plus years in jail for non-violent crime or misdemeanor -- RACE WILL REMAIN AN ISSUE.

So, in conclusion, not only have the past attacks on affirmative action have proven detrimental to the advancement of Black students, the eradication of the practices in such a race conscious society could pose a great threat to advancement of Black

The result of a Michigan loss could be catastrophic, leading to what would eventually be a re-segregation of the United States educational system. A system such as this not only fosters inferior education, but also perpetuates it -- stifling the intellectual growth and educational advancement of black people.

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With President Bush's seven new Supreme Court Justices, there is a strong possibility that in the Michigan case the court will decide against the race-based admission leading to the subsequent demise of Affirmative Action in higher education. According to and article in the Legal Times entitled "Will Affirmative Action Survive?" the loss of the Michigan case would not only end race-based admission in state funded universities, but in all institutes of higher education, including private universities. This would mean the end to programs such as the Ujimaa scholars, which brings in almost one half of Northeastern Black freshman population each year

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policies, Black people will face a new form of oppression - one that promotes racial inequality and inferior education.

With the end of race-based admission, the Supreme Court will be sending the message that race is no longer an issue - when indeed it is.

Because still, after thousands of hangings, slayings castrations, and burnings Black people continue to be beaten with Billie clubs, sodomized with plungers, bodies riddled with NYPD-issued bullets dragged behind pickup trucks with Texas license plates. All because of this natural bodily substance called melanin and its ability to cause others of a lesser hue to develop a deep fear and hatred of those of us with pigmentation.

Yet, to my bewilderment, there are people who still maintain that in America - this so-called land of the free - race is

people. It is thus, painfully obvious that a loss for the Affirmative Action case in Michigan would affirm a victory for a racist system. A modern-day lynching for the educational advancement of our people.

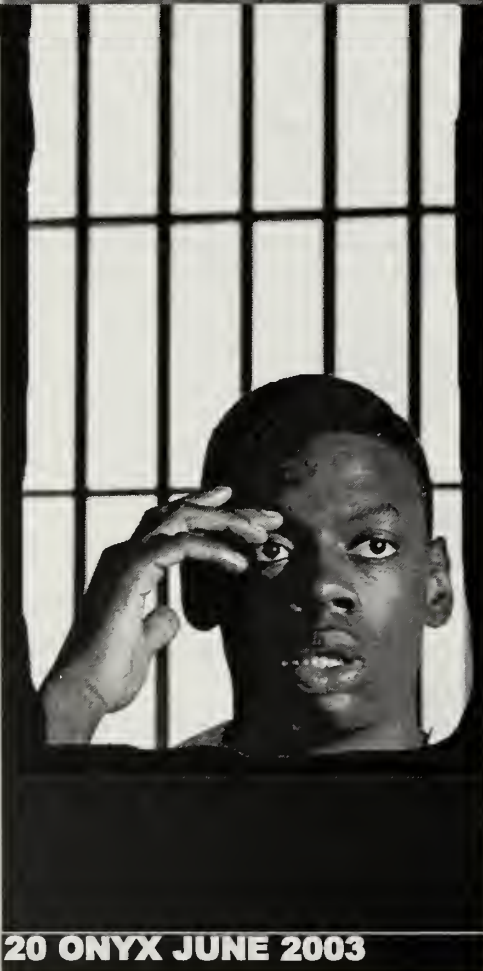


Is it a dream or is it reality?

An Excerpt from Daitwan David's Oratory Speech



"The status quo is understood to be a set of power relations that has whites on the top, and blacks on the bottom especially poor black people... Invariably, people of color and the poor are subjected to disparate treatment at every stage of the criminal justice system, from arrest to prosecution and pre-trial, to conviction, sentencing and parole decisions. That disparate treatment is a direct reflection of the institutionalization of racism in the system. I mean, there's as much cocaine in the Sears Tower or the Stock Exchange as in the black community, but those guys are harder to catch, that is why they inevitably concentrate their energies on us" - Randall Robinson, *The Debt*



This excerpt from Randall Robinson's book was the last thing I remembered reading before I fell asleep.

I had a dream that night that I was on the show Jeopardy. I had finally gained control of the board and decided to chose the section that all the other contestants seemed to skip over.

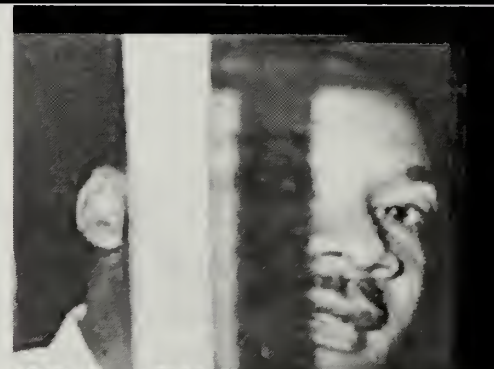
"'Black Issues/Black Perspectives' for 100, please," I said. Mr. Trebec looked at me surprisingly and said.

"Answer: It is the system Black people claim fails to work for them due to their class, race, national origin and or ethnicity. Yet it is a system that works wonders for those who created it."

I pressed the buzzer as it were an involuntary reflex (like breathing), because, come on, how could I not know the answer? So I shouted out with Black pride, "What is the white man's system!"

With that, Alex Trebec responded, "I'm sorry, Daitwan. That is incorrect." He then pointed to my co-contestant, Jim, who responded. "What is the people of African descent's perspective of the criminal justice system in America." Trebec then responded, "that is absolutely correct, Jim. You have gained control of the board. Now don't ever lose it again."

Shocked with what I had just dreamt, I awoke in utter dismay. ...However, I soon realized the truth: that regardless of whether I am awake or asleep, dead or alive, the facts will remain the same - the ignorance of the world is real and



there is no escaping it, even in the realm of sleep. Why? Because ignorance does not die, nor does it sleep. The same holds true of racial prejudices, which is the spawn of ignorance.


The criminal justice (which is a network of courts, officials, agencies and governmental organizations) is full of racial prejudices. One of its primary functions is to provide a formally sanctioned punishment for all those who live in the society and break the law and it supposed to execute this task in a fair and just manner. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Three strikes your out is in full effect and it doesn't help if you're already born with two (being both poor and Black). And you definitely out of luck if you're born with three (just add being a Black male to that list).

The truth of the matter is, this ignorance and racial prejudices are the reasons why our judicial system is so backward; why Black people are stopped, jailed and convicted disproportionately to whites and why we are still a target.

Observatory

Reflection By: Keith Little

Image: Ellis Reid



I keep lookin for 2pac, but 'against all odds' I can't find him. Kinda funny. It's aight, tho. As 'unbelievable' as it sounds im bout to get 'super lyrical' in this cipher with Biggie and Pun. Miles is dipped in 'all blues', and got his horn and Jimi got the guitar covered in 'purple haze' so forget a beat, we set it. We goin back and forth when I catch Aaliyah eyeing me. Now you know this chance is 'one in a million' so I gotta approach. As I walk toward her Left-Eye tries to 'creep' in and grab my attention. I mean she's cool and all(naw she was the crazy one right), but she aint Aaliyah. So I kick it with Ms. Haughton for a minute and tell her I'll get at her later. This day's goin pretty good for me so far, if it's daytime.

Just then night begins to fall. The sun sets at a lil faster pace to help you notice it. But it is not a dark, heavy night that drags on your shoulders until the sun helps pick you up. It is a gentle darkness to give your eyes a break(too much light can blind you). I stroll around for awhile until I bump into Malcolm and Martin talking to Socrates and Confucius. I sit down quietly, absorbing more in what seemed to be an hour than I ever did reading about these men. "Knowledge begets knowledge", no wonder they can talk for eternity. Nat Turner, John Brown, and Che Guevera pace around the outskirts of the discussion, throwing an opinion in here or there. Obviously they can handle themselves mentally, but feel more comfortable in action.

So much to see, so little ... what am I saying? I turn a corner and see William Shakespeare collaborating with Langston Hughes under moonlight. I try to peep their poetry but they keep it under wraps. Not til it's done is what they tell me, but I have always been impatient. It's cool tho. I pull out my book and let em see what I got. Every other line is influenced by someone up here and they praise and punish my work. I can take the criticism tho and I know it's only gonna make me better. I give em both a pound and jog on towards a crowd surrounded by bright lights.

There are bright lights and so much cheering the sound is almost deafening. I cut a path through the crowd and see Roberto Clemente taking fastballs from Satchel Paige. I go out and play left field, but I gotta watch out for Jim Thorpe tossin the pigskin with Walter Payton. I almost fall down from laughter when I see Sugar Ray Robinson sparring with Wilt Chamberlain. It only makes sense. He's the only man with a big enough ego to actually think he could win. He's calm as he gets pummeled tho. Every few times he gets hit he smiles and tells Sugar to wait until they get back on the court.

I am sitting enjoying all of this when someone taps me on my shoulder. I turn and it is my grandmother, both of my grandmothers, my grandfather, uncles, cousins and so many other people I can barely count them all. All my family of course. I am overwhelmed. They look so happy, at ease and together. They tell me exactly where I came from and how they are related to me. I talk to them all as my grandmother's great uncle's third cousin removed braids my hair. They tell me how it was running through the woods of Florida(Seminole you know) and tracking game across the grasslands of Africa. I feel blessed to know so much more about the cultures that produced me, especially since it is coming straight from their mouths. I close my eyes, but there is no rest for those who are not weary. So I simply relax and try to comprehend this is my eternity. No more pain, no more struggle, no more fear. This is what I will see, when I close my eyes for the last time. What will you see?

Let The Memories Last Forever
And Let Your Past Be Your Guide To Your Future

03

